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This study undertook to determine (1) the dominant personality types of students participating in student activities, (2) the personality differences between student leaders at a state university and at a junior college, and (3) the personality differences between male and female student leaders. Twenty-eight student leaders from Flint Community Junior College and 41 from the University of Missouri were given the Vocational Preference Inventory test, of which only the following 14-item scales were used: realistic, intellectual, social, artistic, conventional, and enterprising. The social type was dominant (39%), the artistic type was second (28%), and the enterprising was third (17%) for both institutions. The university student leaders scored higher than the junior college leaders on the enterprising scale. The dominant type for the male student leaders was the enterprising (33%), while for the females it was the social (45%). The personality type of student leader can provide a clue to the style of leadership he will follow in administering or supervising his particular organization. The selection of students for leadership positions could be based on a successful pairing of their personality types with the demands of specific organizations. (HH)

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# PERSONALITY TYPES OF STUDENT LEADERS IN A STATE UNIVERSITY AND A JUNIOR COLLEGE

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Students who participate in a college or university program of student activities perform a variety of services and are involved in diversified programs. They are elected or appointed to numerous leadership positions, but most often, they volunteer for these positions. Williamson and Hoyt (1952) compared five categories of student leaders at the University of Minnesota on the basis of their scores on the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory and reported that students holding certain positions of "formal" leadership differ significantly with respect to personality characteristics from "students in general". The student leaders obtained higher scores on the scales of Pd (psychopathic deviate), Pa (paranoia), and Ma (hypomania).

Winborn and Jansen (1967) studied the personality characteristics of 559 student leaders at Indiana University in order to obtain a more adequate understanding of social-political action groups by using scores on the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire. Significant differences were found among the student leaders at Indiana University on 10 of the 16 PF scales. The data suggest a unique combination of personality characteristics which serve to differentiate leaders of social-political groups from the leaders of other groups at Indiana. Three factors of Superego Strength, Autia (daydreaming), and Radicalism contributed primarily to this uniqueness.

The purpose of this research was to study and compare personality types of student leaders by using their scores obtained from Holland's Vocational Preference Inventory (VPI), Sixth Revision, 1965. Holland states in his book, The Psychology of Vocational Choice (1966), "If vocational interests are an

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expression of personality, then it follows that interest inventories are personality inventories... Moreover, the content of vocational interest inventories provides scales whose reliabilities and validities approximate those obtained for other methods (p. 3)."

Three questions were raised:

(1) What are the dominant personality types of students participating in student activity groups?

(2) What are the differences in the personality types between student leaders from a state university when compared with student leaders from a community junior college?

(3) What are the differences in the personality types of male student leaders when compared to female student leaders?

## Method

The population from which the study sample was drawn consisted of 69 student leaders from Flint Community Junior College (FCJC), Flint, Michigan, and the University of Missouri, Columbia Campus. Inventories were distributed to 55 FCJC officers of Student Government, the College Union Board, student clubs, and the college newspaper staff. FCJC student leaders returned 28 completed inventories for a 51% response. The University of Missouri sample consisted of 41 student leaders who attended meetings of the Student Activity Board, the Association of Women Students Orientation Committee, and the Student Activity Leadership Training Class. The investigator administered the VPI to all university student leaders who were present at the meetings. First-choice scores on only the following 14-item scales of the VPI were used; realistic, intellectual, social, conventional, enterprising, and artistic. The scales and their general interpretation according to Holland are listed in Table 1. The scores obtained on the six "model-types" were grouped, tabulated and converted into percentage scores as the method of comparison.

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Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here

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## Results

The results of the 69 student leaders responses to the selected scales of the VPI are listed in Table 2. The social "model-type" was the dominant personality type for student leaders from both institutions with the artistic "model-type" in second place. Student leaders from the university scored higher on the enterprising scale than did student leaders from the junior college.

The dominant personality type for male student leaders was the enterprising scale while the social "model-type" was dominant among female student leaders.

## Discussion

The data suggest a great deal of similarity among the personality types of student leaders at the University of Missouri when compared to student leaders at Flint Community Junior College. The largest single difference was the university students rating higher on the enterprising scale. This particular finding should be replicated due to the small sample obtained from the male population of student leaders at the University of Missouri since 7 out of 12 males rated highest on the enterprising scale with the five remaining males scoring one each on the five remaining scales.

The results of this investigation support the findings of Winborn and Jansen (1967) that differences do exist in the personality types of student activity leaders. The differences were most pronounced in the comparison of the personality types between male and female student leaders. The personality type of a particular student leader can provide a clue to the "pattern" or "style" of leadership he will tend to follow in the administration and supervision of his particular student organization. In addition, the selection of students for leadership positions could be based on successful "pairings" of their personality types with the demands and tasks of specific organizational environments.

## Summary

Student leaders from the University of Missouri, Columbia Campus, were compared with student leaders from Flint Community Junior College on the basis of personality types as inventoried by Holland's Vocational Preference Inventory. The dominant personality types of student leaders from both campuses were the social (39%), artistic (28%), and enterprising (17%) "model-types". The enterprising scale appeared to differentiate university student leaders from junior college student leaders. Male student leaders scored highest on the enterprising scale (33%) while female student leaders scored highest on the social scale (45%).

TABLE 1

Holland's Interpretation of the Six VPI* Scales

| Scale | Preference for |
|---|---|
| Realistic | Technical & skilled trades |
| Intellectual | Scientific occupations |
| Social | Teaching & helping occupations |
| Conventional | Clerical occupations |
| Enterprising | Supervisory & sales occupations |
| Artistic | Artistic, musical, & literary occupations |

*Vocational Preference Inventory

TABLE 2

Comparison of Percentage Scores in 6 VPI Scales among Categories of Student Leaders

| VPI Scale | U. Of M. % score | | | FCJC % score | | | Combined % score | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male (n=12) | Female (n=29) | M & F (n=41) | Male (n=15) | Female (n=13) | M & F (n=28) | Male (n=27) | Female (n=42) | M & F (n=69) |
| Realistic | 8.3 | 0.0 | 2.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 3.7 | 0.0 | 1.5 |
| Intellectual | 8.3 | 6.9 | 7.3 | 20.0 | 7.7 | 14.3 | 14.8 | 7.2 | 10.1 |
| Social | 8.3 | 41.4 | 31.9 | 26.7 | 58.3 | 39.3 | 18.5 | 45.1 | 34.8 |
| Conventional | 8.3 | 6.9 | 7.3 | 13.3 | 7.7 | 10.7 | 11.1 | 7.2 | 8.7 |
| Enterprising | 58.5 | 6.9 | 21.9 | 13.3 | 7.7 | 10.7 | 33.4 | 7.2 | 17.4 |
| Artistic | 8.3 | 37.9 | 29.2 | 26.7 | 23.1 | 25.0 | 18.5 | 33.3 | 27.5 |
| Totals | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

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